

TOWN Reminder

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Serving the town of South Hadley

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INDEX

Viewpoints	6
Sports	10
Classifieds	14
Public Notices	15

NEWS, 2

Top 10 News Stories of the Year



SOUTH HADLEY, 5



FACES & PLACES, 7

Top 10 Photos of the Year



YEAR IN REVIEW 2020

By Melina Bourdeau
and Dalton Zbierski

January

For most people, 2020 has been one of the most tumultuous years on record. Many residents will remember this year primarily for COVID-19, an unprecedented virus that has killed thousands of Americans and sickened millions more.

Despite the unfortunate developments that have dominated the past 12 months, 2020 hasn't been all bad. In the town of South Hadley, residents have stepped up, taken on new responsibilities and banded together as they successfully persevered.

As part of this commemorative "Year in Review" edition of the Town Reminder, the editorial staff at Turley Publications has highlighted many of the news stories that captured the essence of 2020 to the fullest extent in South Hadley.

While COVID-19 had already begun to wreak havoc overseas, it was but a blip on the radar for the residents of South Hadley in January 2020. On Jan. 4, a local tradition continued, as five young women were selected as finalists to become the Grand Colleen during the 66th annual Colleen Pageant at Holyoke High School.

Among the finalists representing South Hadley were Emily Couture, 18, Moira McDermott, 17, and Haley Dusseault, 17. All five finalists would participate in a February contest that would determine the Grand Colleen.

On Jan. 18, another annual initiative was once again successful. "Bag the Community," a highly-organized mass-collection event coordinated by South



Chief Todd Calkins was thrown into the fire in March when he assumed full command of South Hadley Fire District No. 2. The fourth-generation firefighter is a 33-year veteran of the department; his experience is a valuable commodity during this crisis.

Hadley High School students in conjunction with the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Pantry, celebrated its 10th year.

Despite low temperatures and inclement weather, hundreds of contributors donated thousands of pounds of food items to the

South Hadley pantry. SHHS served as the sorting site, where a contingent of students organized the goods.

"I think that what we do here

Please see **YEAR IN REVIEW**,
page 9



The Johnson family & staff of Pleasant Street Auto Body & Repair, Hampshire Towing, Amber Scene Clean, and T+T Towing would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to all who have supported us throughout this difficult year and beyond. We continue to look back fondly on the friendships we have with our customers, built on honesty & trust, throughout our many years in business. The greatest gift a small business can receive is a loyal customer, and we are proud to be of service to you all.

We are thinking of you during this festive time of year and send our warmest wishes for a bright, joyful, safe, & healthy New Year to you and your loved ones!

The Johnson Family

Bill & Tracey • David • Robert, Jennifer, & baby Josephine

Jennifer Archambault, Kevin Archambault, Becca Bæz, David Bæz, Debra Barnes, Daniel Bell, Carina Berard, Robert Bernier, Harry Bolio, Darci Bouchard, Jeff Bray, Christian Brinegar, Nolan Canale, Antoinette Cossey, Allen Croteau, Corey Croteau, Guy Demers, Matt Duga, Loryn Engelbrecht, David Facchini, Darrin Fenn, Karen Fernandes, Jason Fernandez, José Figueroa, Javier Fontanez, Matt Giera, Lee Jekanowski, Doug Jenkins, Michæl Johnson, Cameron Kelleher, Jeff Kirley, Michæl Kochanek, Josh Larivee, Jennifer Lemelin, Kraig Lynds, Aaron Morrison, Kim Myers, Anthony Pieras, Eric Platanitis, Stephen Pronovost, Ethan Provost, Walter Ragoza, George Randall, Travis Richer, Nick Riley, John Ross, John Roy, Dwayne Routhier, Douglas Rowland, Justin Sanchez, Emma Sawtelle, Danielle Scoons, Steve Sexton, Logan Simard, Steve Simard, Robert Smith, Shawn Stebbins, Heather Thresher, Mario Turri, Luis Vasques, and Joel Ware

Happy Holidays from our family to yours!

TOP 10 NEWS STORIES of 2020

By Melina Bourdeau
Staff Writer

From a national election to a global pandemic, 2020 will certainly be a historic year. Among the many events that happened this year, these are the top 10 stories from the 2020 Town Reminder editions.

COVID death count rises in South Hadley, cases reach record high (Dec. 4, 2020)

South Hadley's COVID-19 death count has risen twice more. Between Nov. 24 and Dec. 1, two additional residents succumbed to the novel coronavirus, marking the town's 27th and 28th COVID-related fatalities.

"There were two deaths last week. We had a record week for confirmed cases with 27 new ones, which is disturbing," said Mike Sullivan, Town Administrator. "That's two more empty seats at the table; people in South Hadley that somebody will miss. We don't want that to be more than it has to be."

As of Dec. 1, South Hadley had reported an accumulative 327 confirmed, 320 contact, 14 suspected and 14 probable cases of COVID-19 this year. In each of the past two weeks, the confirmed case count rose by 27.

Student Union starts 'the fight against inequality' (Aug. 7, 2020)

An active group of South Hadley High School students recently organized an Aug. 1 vigil that honored those who have lost their lives to police brutality or suffered from inequalities last week in the school's parking lot.

Last Saturday's initiative served as the debut project for the recently established student group, the South Hadley Student Union. A score of residents joined the students in the high school parking lot, lighting candles and taking a knee to memorialize all who have succumb to racial injustices.

"We started the student union at our high school to fight against inequality issues and any other racial justice issues that may arise within the community," said Sophia Kennedy, a rising junior. "It's really powerful that our entire community can come together to show that we are dedicated to making change and that we are dedicated to making it now."

Continuing the conversation: Gundersen speaks policing (June 26, 2020)

South Hadley Police Chief Jennifer Gundersen remains confident the local department



The South Hadley Annual Town Meeting on Wednesday was unlike any other, meeting in the St. Theresa of Lisieux Parish.

is up to the task of serving the community. Since she arrived in South Hadley, Gundersen said she has placed an emphasis on community policing, a more civil and communicative approach to law enforcement.

Gundersen joined the June 23 virtual Selectboard meeting for nearly an hour to address questions that were submitted to the town. She immediately acknowledged the police-related incidents that have occurred nationally over the past several weeks.

"We are extremely disturbed and disheartened by the violence that police officers have had against people of color in our country," said Gundersen. "Our community, our state and our country are a little bit in crisis. My profession is in crisis, as it circles around how we provide services to our community."

South Hadley, Granby favor Biden (Nov. 6, 2020)

As many voters woke up on Nov. 3, everyone could agree the national election would be an

historic one.

As of 2 a.m. on Nov. 5, Vice President Joe Biden led heavily in South Hadley, accumulating 6,587 votes, which amounted to 65.79% of the total count. At that point, President Donald Trump had received 3,223 votes, 32.19% of all votes.

Voters in Granby certainly showed up to voice their opinion with a total of 82% turnout in the national election with 3,945 of

Please see **NEWS STORIES**, page 3











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Ware resident Susan Kenney was the first family member to testify about the conditions and problems at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home. She lost her father, Charles Lowell, to COVID-19, and 75 other veterans at the home died of virus as well.



Town officials sat at the front of the audience during the July 25 Granby Annual Town Meeting, which was held outside under a massive tent.

NEWS STORIES from page 2
4,855 voters who cast their ballot.

Town meeting members talk funding police (June 19, 2020)

The June 17 Annual Town Meeting that occurred in the parking lot of St. Theresa of Lisieux Parish was brief but did not occur without disagreement. All eight warrant articles were approved, but a contentious discussion took aim at the \$48,142,557 proposed town budget. As part of the approved budget, the South Hadley Police Department will receive \$1,237,768 for the 2021 fiscal year. Town Meeting member Anne Sobel of Precinct B began a prolonged conversation by debating the morality and wisdom of funding law enforcement.

"We are being asked to vote on an increase of approximately \$175,000 for the police department," said Sobel. "Here's the thing; we've been specifically asked by the Black Lives Matter to vote 'no' on all increases to police budgets and to vote 'yes' to reallocate such spending to health care, education and community programs."

Mower subject of debate at Granby ATM (July 30, 2020)

An old tradition took on new form on July 25, as Granby's 2020 Annual Town Meeting occurred outside in front of Granby Junior/Senior High School. The 82-minute affair was largely uneventful with the exception of a conversation regarding a lawnmower. Article 13 called for the town to allot \$115,000 towards the purchase of an air-conditioned mower for the Public Buildings Department. The Finance Committee recommended that the item be postponed indefinitely.

School committee selects superintendent, Dr. Jahmal Mosley unanimously approved (Nov. 27, 2020)

The South Hadley School Committee voted on its next superintendent last Friday,



Dr. Jahmal Mosley was selected by the South Hadley School Committee Nov. 20 to be the next superintendent.

day, after about a year of searching. The selected candidate is Dr. Jahmal Mosley, who was unanimously approved by the committee in a special committee meeting last Friday. Joining Mosley as candidates for the position were acting South Hadley Superintendent Dr. Diana Bonneville and Dr. Carole Learned-Miller.

Trust violated: Soldiers' Home hearings depict a culture of noncompliance (Oct. 23, 2020)

A culture of poor health care, staff shortages and a lack of infection control measures at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke led to the COVID-19-related deaths of at least 76 elderly veterans this spring. On Oct. 20, family members of those killed or sickened by the unprecedented outbreak testified before a Joint Special Legislative Oversight Committee at Holyoke Community College. For the speakers, a sense of closure was nowhere to be found. Present, however, was a platform to address a panel of concerned state senators and representatives. Fighting back tears, loved ones emotionally detailed the negligent actions, lack of compassion and total absence of communication that transformed Holy-

oke's "Gem on the Hill" into a facility marred by too many deaths.

SRO inspired students to do more (April 3, 2020)

Next fall, a member of the police department will be asked to fill the void that has been left by one of the school district's friendliest faces. School Resource Officer Steve Fleming, 54, announced his retirement on Thursday, March 26; Fleming assumed the position in 2011 and made an astounding impact on local students in the years that followed. "I've heard from a lot of the students' parents that the students really respected Steve. He had a knack, they knew he was

the real deal and you can't fake that with these kids," said South Hadley Police Chief, Jennifer Gundersen.

Dog park a reality (Oct. 30, 2020)

After three years of arduous preparation, the South Hadley Dog Park opened to the public on Oct. 8. The 1.8-acre facility offers separate play areas for both small and large dogs to exercise and recreate. "It is fabulous. It's beyond fabulous. The park is beautiful. It's just wonderful for dogs and their human owners," said Brenda Mathieu, president of the Friends of the South Hadley Dog Park, a nonprofit organization that is seeking donations for the upkeep and maintenance of the park.



At the South Hadley Student Union vigil, the students wrote the names of people of color who died due to police brutality in chalk on the pavement.

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NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

Diana Bonneville

By Melina Bourdeau
Staff writer

SOUTH HADLEY – Although long-time high school principal Diana Bonneville has been a part of the South Hadley community for years, she was appointed interim superintendent last November.

While getting accustomed to the position, along with the rest of the world, a global pandemic thrust her into uncharted territory.

South Hadley School Committee Chair Kyle Belanger said Bonneville hit the ground running in her position, bringing back leadership meetings in the district as well as bringing in Jennifer Voyik as business administrator.

During the 2020 fiscal year, Bonneville worked with the school committee to build the budget, going line by line over each item. Belanger said it was



In her term as interim superintendent for about a year, Diana Bonneville made “bold decisions” for the South Hadley School District while learning the position during a pandemic.

at that point the committee “marathon meetings,” some last- earned a reputation for having its ing for six hours.

He said coming into the budget process early in her tenure, Bonneville had to start from nothing and find a replacement administrative assistant.

“By throwing the doors open and collaborating, we moved the needle on the deficit,” Belanger said. “We asked the building representatives to present to us and asked them about what that line item was for and if it’s been used. We were finally able to achieve a collaboration in a way that benefitted everyone.”

“(Diana) made bold decision despite the ‘interim’ title, it shows her dedicated leadership,” Belanger said. “There are folks who would opt not to ‘stir to pot,’ but Diana knew the district required bold leadership. She also so did all of this while learning the job.”

One of those decisions included going remote at Plains Elementary after an increase of COVID-19 cases put a strain on the school.

Bonneville also served as a temporary principal at Mosier Elementary until a permanent replacement was hired.

“She’s been dedicated to listening and having the conversations that would have been unheard of 14 months ago,” he said.

Come July of 2021, Bonneville will be relieved by Jahmal Mosley, who will take over as superintendent.

Belanger said Bonneville has put the district in a better position for the future than she found it.

He equated Bonneville with a superhero.

“Not many superheroes know they’re about to become superheroes, Peter Parker didn’t know he was going to be bit by that spider,” Belanger said. “In that same way, Diana didn’t realize it.”

NEWSMAKER OF THE YEAR

Mike Sullivan

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

SOUTH HADLEY – As the COVID-19 pandemic dominates the headlines, South Hadley has looked to a man it could trust to deliver imperative information to the public.

That man is Town Administrator Michael Sullivan, and for that reason, the Town Reminder has named Sullivan as its newsmaker of the year.

Sullivan, who is set to retire next summer, entered 2020 with his focus on a myriad of issues; none of them involving the novel coronavirus. When the COVID-19 outbreak reached South Hadley, the town administrator accepted added responsibility and relayed important protocols and mandates to the public.

Nevertheless, not even Sullivan is sure how to interpret a year that has been unlike any other in recent history.

“It’s almost the end of December, and I still don’t really understand 2020,” said Sullivan. “It has been an absolutely bizarre year dealing with COVID and trying to stay with the guidelines, coordinate directives, make sure grants are applied for and doing everything we can to keep the public informed.”

Amid the confusion, Sullivan became a voice of reason and clarity. He noted that it could take years to truly decipher “if we did it right,” but all signs point towards a job well done by Sullivan in 2020.

The tenured public servant credits the media for offering him a platform that has allowed him to educate the public on a string of developments that, at times, seemingly changed by the hour. He credited residents for following through on difficult and unfamiliar, but necessary, safety measures.



Town administrator Mike Sullivan

“They haven’t always liked the changes but they’ve done what they needed to do, and we really appreciate that,” said Sullivan.

Over the course of 2020, Sullivan believes that public participation in municipal government has increased significantly. Throughout his 22-year political career, much has changed, but not even a pandemic has altered Sullivan’s perception of the invaluable role he plays in South Hadley.

“It’s an incredible community to work in and work for, and it’s still all about communicating with people,” said Sullivan. “That’s been the same during the pandemic as it was pre-pandemic. I’m sure it will be the same after the pandemic; delivering information to people even when they don’t want to hear it or disagree.”

Crossword Puzzle

1	2	3							4	5	6					
7									8				9			
10				11					12							
13								14	15			16				
17				18				19				20				
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39	40						41					42				
43							44						45			
46				47									48			
49														50		
															52	
				51												

CLUES ACROSS

1. Crow species

4. Partner to flow

7. Male offspring

8. Sedate

10. Orange beverage

12. Pair of small hand drums

13. 12th month of Jewish civil year

14. Former Pirates star Jason

16. Computer company

17. Made angry

19. Beverage container

20. Charlize Theron film “__ Flux”

21. Localities

25. Consume

26. Don’t know when yet

27. Bed style

29. Make a low,

continuous sound

30. Wrath

31. Pollinates flowers

32. Association

39. Prejudice

41. Unhealthy

42. Hasidic religious leader

43. Distinctive philosophy

44. Short-term memory

45. In a good way

46. Emperors of Ethiopia

48. Imaginary line

49. Of barium

50. One’s sense of self-esteem

51. Man who behaves dishonorably

52. Monetary unit

CLUES DOWN

1. Rear of (nautical)

2. He minds the net

3. Ring-shaped objects

4. When you hope to get there

5. Young children

6. Beloved hobbit

8. Pigpen

9. Wish harm upon

11. Quick-eyed (Scottish)

14. Scrooge’s phrase “__ Humbug”

15. One more

18. A ballplayer who only hits

19. Once vital TV part

20. Sixth month of Jewish civil year

22. Advantage

23. Type of tree

24. Luke’s mentor __-Wan

27. Life stories

28. Vase

29. Tiny

31. Package (abbr.)

32. A photog’s tool

33. Wood

34. One of the six noble gases (abbr.)

35. Pueblo people of New Mexico

36. Wild goats

37. A way to comply

38. Horatio __, British admiral

39. Actress Leslie

40. Sir __ Newton

44. Pouch

47. Have already done

GPL from page 4

Library staff will ask your child(ren)’s age(s). You can request a personalized box, feel free to ask for books, music.

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library 467-3320 or email the library at granbypubliclibrary@gmail.com.

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EDITORIAL

Yes, Virginia. There is a Santa Claus!

No one could have realized it back in 1897, but that’s when the New York Sun published what was to become an iconic part of local journalism history. The Sun printed what is now the most widely read letter to a newspaper. It was sent by an 8-year-old New York City girl named Virginia O’Hanlon. The response to her letter by editorial writer Francis Pharcellus Church is a message of love, magic and hope. Considering this past year, we imagine many readers could use a generous serving of that next to a plate of Christmas cookies. So, here is the full text of that historic letter:

Dear Editor,

I am 8 years old.
Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.
Papa says, “If you see it in The Sun, it’s so.”
Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O’Hanlon

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men’s or children’s, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that’s no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby’s rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10 thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.



GUEST COLUMN

Memories bring you home again

This will be the first year in many decades that I won’t celebrate Christmas with my siblings. I am certain that many of you are in the same boat, so to speak. While we are all doing what we can to slow the spread of the virus, it doesn’t always come easy. Reflecting back on the Christmases of my childhood conjure up so many wonderful memories; many of them involving plants of one kind or another. Read on for some McQuaid nostalgia.

I’d start bugging my dad around Halloween to visit the local tree farm to tag our Christmas tree. Lucky for me he knew the owners, so when we knocked on the door in late October we were handed a tag and a grease pen without so much as a strange glance. I was very particular about my tree, that is why we “tagged” so early. It had to be on the tall side, but stout. Not perfect, by any means; there had to be “holes” in which to put the houses and the bird’s nests. It seemed, though, that we always picked the first coldest day of the year. Dad’s bum finger would be blue, but no matter, he’d humor me as I’d circle the tree farm from front to back at least twice to get the “best” tree.

Fast forward to the day after Thanksgiving when my parents and older siblings home from college or work would trek up into the woods, passing by the “cellar hole” ending up by the “big rock.” With garbage bags in hand we’d pick Princess Pine, enough to make a wreath for our door, and one each for the other kids to take back with them. This was a grand adventure for a small child. It seemed as if we were in no man’s land, although we were likely less than a quarter of a mile from home! When we were sure we had enough we’d head back down the hill, and dad would get right to work. I can still picture him on the back porch bending a coat hanger into a circle, attaching some wire and reaching into the bag of greens to gather up bunches and attach them to the frame. He used to do such a good job that you couldn’t tell where he started or finished and you could use either side of the wreath;

both looked the same! Mom would add a red bow, some fake berries and a pine cone or two and off it went to New Jersey, New York or wherever education and destination took my brothers and sister.

IN THE GARDEN



Roberta McQuaid

Another early Christmas memory was of a white pine Christmas tree my next oldest brother decorated for his room. It was tiny, and a real “Charlie Browner” but as a little kid I thought it was really cool how he made the ornament by rolling tiny Styrofoam balls in glitter then decorating them with ric rac. The coffee can filled with sand as his “stand” was pretty cool too. When I mentioned the tree to him just recently he had forgotten all about it.

One especially fond remembrance is of my babci’s Christmas cactus ablaze in blooms on a plant stand in my mother’s room. I ended up with the plant as well as its stand. And although I rarely achieve the fireworks babci or my mother did, this year I did have a dozen or so of the fuchsia-colored flowers, starting around Thanksgiving and continuing to Christmas. The plant is mostly in good shape for being close to a century old!

I have children of my own now and it’s fun to intersperse our new traditions with some from my own childhood. Right after Thanksgiving I make a wreath for a friend’s birthday. And although I don’t drag my husband to the tree farm in October, I do make him circle the farm a few times to make sure we find the perfect tree.

Whatever your memories are, share them, and if the mood suits you, write them down for your kids and grandkids to enjoy.

Merry Christmas!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekenedy@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

A QUOTE

of NOTE
“ People have to realize that this probably is going to go on for more than a month. Maybe even several months. At this time, we just don’t know. It’s going to get worse before it gets better; we’re not at the peak yet. ”

State Rep. Dan Carey
on March 20, 2020.
Local, state officials in close communication

OPINION PAGE/
LETTERS POLICY

Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed. Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to townreminder@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to Town Reminder, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

TOWN
Reminder

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PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

EDITOR
Melina Bourdeau
townreminder@turley.com

STAFF WRITER
Dalton Zbierski
dzbierski@turley.com

ADVERTISING SALES
Maureen McGarrett Hall
mmcgarrett@turley.com

SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com

SOCIAL MEDIA



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TOP 10 PHOTOS of 2020



Photo by Shelby Macri
Moira McDermott is crowned as the grand colleen by 2020 Parade Marshal John Driscoll during the Coronation Ball last Saturday at the Log Cabin in Holyoke on Feb. 15.

By Melina Bourdeau

The adage, “A picture is worth 1,000 words” certainly rings true in photojournalism. Photographs can often tell a story better than the words printed next to it and draw a reader in. These are 10 photographs which captured both newsworthy and historic moments in the lives of people in the community in 2020.

SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 8

Photo by Capt. Ryan Moore
Lt. Brian Faye with Wiley moments after a dramatic rescue on April 22.

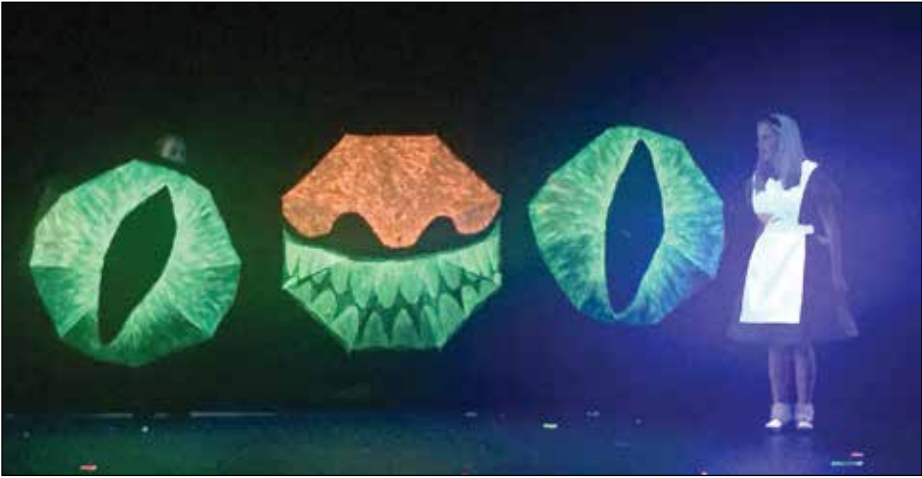


Photo by Dalton Zbierski
The glowing Cheshire Cat (voiced by sixth-grader Leah Bobrowski and fifth-graders Jane Samlall and Isabell Cabezudo-Peters) keep an eerie eye on Alice during her time in Wonderland. The Michael E. Smith Middle School play was held on Feb. 7.

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Photo by Carly Rae Brunault
South Hadley kindergartner of Plains School, Ronan Errico-Bauer, hangs a ‘thank you’ sign outside his home in April. “Thank you, healthcare workers, grocery store workers, farmers, mail carriers and Trucker Drivers like daddy,” Errico-Bauer said.

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USDA INSP. FRESH PORK SHOULDER PICNIC	99¢ lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF STRIPLOIN STEAKS	\$4⁷⁹ lb	GOOSE	\$5⁹⁹ lb
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USDA INSP. FRESH STORE MADE HOLIDAY ROAST BONELESS PORKLOIN..... STUFFED WITH HAM, CHEESE, BACON, OLIVES & SPICES	\$3⁹⁹ lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN 1/2 HAM PORTIONS.....	79¢ lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN FULLY COOKED MEATBALLS 5 LB BAG	\$9⁹⁹ ea
USDA INSP. HATFIELD 16-20 LB SKINLESS & SHANKLESS WHOLE SMOKED HAM.....	\$1⁹⁹ lb	SALE DATES: 12/24/20 - 12/30/20 Will Close 12/31 at 4PM Closed 1/1/2021		INSPI. IQF FROZEN RAW PEELED SHRIMP 16/20 COUNT 2 LB BAG.....	\$14⁹⁹ ea
				INSPI. IQF FROZEN COOKED SHRIMP 31/40 COUNT 2 LB BAG.....	\$14⁹⁹ ea

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At the tail end of the parade on March 31, was Pat Lemieux, the high school vice principal with a ceramic tiger from in front of the school in his flatbed truck.

Photo by Dalton Zbierski



Photo by Brian Willette
Massachusetts Military Order of the Purple Heart Commander Brian Willette arrived at the senior center on Nov. 10 to thank fellow veterans as part of a curbside pickup meal program.



Curtis Lucchesi walks up the stage to get his diploma while his loved ones cheer at the drive-up graduation on Friday, Aug. 7.

Submitted photo
Staff members and residents celebrate Loomis Village resident Ken Seyffer's 99th birthday outside his cottage on April 29.



At its first outdoor graduation, the Granby High School seniors marched through the parking lot where their families sat in their cars on June 8.

Photo by Melina Bourdeau



Photo by Melina Bourdeau



Photo by Melina Bourdeau
Students from grades seven through 12 were invited to go to the reverse parade held at Granby High School on May 29.

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YEAR IN REVIEW from page 1

really has an impact; it creates a sense of community around the town. I think that what we do here really has an impact; a lot of people come back, and I think one of the biggest things you can do is come back year after year,” said Haley Werenski, a SHHS senior.

February

As COVID-19 remained largely outside of the public eye, another dilemma threatened western Massachusetts in February, a recycling crisis. In the aftermath of China’s National Sword policy, the United States lost its longtime landing spot for the majority of its plastic waste. With China no longer serving as a feasible disposal location, recycling costs across the country subsequently skyrocketed. The town of South Hadley was among many municipalities looking to adapt to the circumstances, and the implications of the recycling market crash became the focus of a Feb. 8 forum inside of the Town Hall.

In May, South Hadley agreed to a recycling contract with Republic Services, which saw costs increase across the board.

Another tradition continued on Feb. 28, as Lenten Lunches returned to the St. Patrick’s Social Center on Main St. Since Lenten Lunches debuted in 1970, it has enabled the parish to contribute \$100,000 to various causes. “We welcome everybody, we’re very cheerful and hope that everyone has a good time. If someone’s having a bad day, we hope that we can make them smile,” said organizer Laura Marsh.

Boasting a menu that included a variety of meal items, most prominently lobster Mac ‘n Cheese, the 50th edition of the weekly Lenten fundraiser was a hit, despite being cut short by the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic.

March

When March of 2020 first made its acquaintance, a sense of unease surrounding the novel coronavirus was present throughout the community. It did not prevent numerous gatherings from occurring in South Hadley.

On March 4, thousands of residents entered the halls of SHHS to cast ballots in the local and state elections. South Hadley TRIAD maintained a steady presence in the halls of the school throughout the day, educating voters on the importance of items such as lock boxes, Files of Life, smoke and CO detectors and house numbering.

“The turnout’s been incredible,” said Lt. Jason Houle of Fire District 1. “We’ve been here a couple of years now with the police department and TRIAD, and I’ve never



seen this many people come through. It’s five times busier than what we usually see during [Election Day].”

On March 14, with COVID-19 already having reached the region, the Knights of Columbus Elder Council 69 in Chicopee hosted what perhaps was the final South Hadley-led large-scale indoor gathering of the year. Organized by the South Hadley contingent of the Holyoke St. Patrick’s Day Parade Committee, the event and its attendees braved the onset of the pandemic.

“I consider us lucky; our money was already paid,” said event organizer Jacqueline Reardon. “We had already paid for the [venue] and the food. I think people need to take care of themselves and I certainly do understand where people are coming from because there are seniors and infants and people who are compromised who really shouldn’t be around everyone.”

Less than 24 hours later, Gov. Charlie Baker would prohibit gatherings of more than 25 people, a number that would soon be lowered to 10. COVID-19 began its rapid spread into the commonwealth, a stay-at-home advisory was implemented and society was changed, all in the span of March.

April

Entering April, it was believed by some that the pandemic would come and go in the span of several weeks. It soon became apparent that COVID-19 was a danger that was here to stay.

The difficult reality was captured by South Hadley Town Administrator Mike Sullivan on April 8, who urged residents to comply with mandates and prepare themselves for the tremendous sacrifices they would be forced to make in the months that followed.

“There are going to be people who don’t like the decisions that we’ve made, but let’s get through this and then there will be plenty of time to complain about it. Right now, you’re in the middle of veering off the road on an icy highway. That’s not the time to have a conversation about, ‘We should have had snow tires,’” said Sullivan.

Sharon Hart, South Hadley’s Emergency Management/Health Director, was praised by town officials in April for the strategic measures she took in January and February to ensure that the town possessed an adequate amount of personal protective equipment.

Weeks before PPE became almost unattainable, Hart acquired a surplus of gloves, gowns, sanitizers, a variety of masks and other significance items such as cleaning supplies. She made the decision after observing the effects of COVID-19 in China, where it originated from, and hinted at the fact that more orders would be necessary.

“Supplies from the private market are thin and are back-ordered now up to eight weeks. We will continue to order supplies from both MEMA and privately as this pandemic may be here for a while,” said Hart in late April.

A beloved community figure also retired in April. School Resource Officer Steve Fleming, who also served as South Hadley’s TRIAD officer, retired following the indefinite closure of schools.

Since joining the department in 1989, Fleming inspired countless residents both young and old. Following his retirement, Fleming accepted a position as the direc-



Patrick McGrevy picks his diploma up from the table at the drive-up graduation for South Hadley High School.

tor of the South Hadley Drug & Alcohol Prevention Coalition, a decision that was influenced by his love for the school district.

“As an SRO, you feel like you’re a part of the school community just about as much as the police department because you’re there all the time,” said Fleming. “It’s not about walking up and down the halls with a gun and a badge. It’s about being a resource for the school; I could be a parent, a counselor or someone friendly that the students can come talk to.”

May

May brought better days, and while the pandemic continued, positive case counts began to lesson in comparison to March and April. Social distancing became more familiar, and residents discovered new, creative ways to connect.

Vehicle parades were among the most popular methods of interacting to be popularized in the spring. On May 14, the South Hadley and Granby Chamber of Commerce orchestrated a parade, encouraging local businesses to keep on keeping on.

“The chamber wanted to let our local businesses know that we were thinking about them and provide a little bit of cheer for them. It’s really to remind folks during these challenging times that the business community in South Hadley is still present; it’s still open for business,” said Chamber President Michelle Theroux.

At the height of the pandemic, no locations were busier than conservation lands. After being inaccessible for

Please see **YEAR IN REVIEW**, page 12



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- **Friday, Dec. 18 at Noon**
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Ware River News
The Journal Register
- **Monday, Dec. 21 at noon**
Town Reminder,
Chicopee Register and
The Holyoke Sun

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Happy New Year!

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The Register, Sentinel,
The Wilbraham-Hampden Times,
Agawam Advertiser News,
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Soccer changes affected approach to game

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

REGION—The MIAA made several rule changes to the sport of soccer this past fall due to COVID-19.

It took a couple of matches for the players, coaches, and referees to get used to the new modified rules.

“It did take some time for the players to get used to the new rules. We’re hoping to go back to soccer without modifications next year,” said Monson girls’ varsity soccer coach Eric Degnan. “The players deserve a lot of credit. You also have to give the referees a lot of credit as well. It wasn’t very easy for them either.”

Granby girls varsity soccer coach Robert Weaver was happy his players had the opportunity to play some matches this fall.

“The girls were very happy just to be getting together, practicing and playing soccer while following the modifications,” Weaver said. “At Granby, we had great backing from the school’s administration, school committee, and health department.”

One of the rule changes was the elimination of throw-ins. When the ball crossed the touchline, the restart was a kick-in, which was the same as an indi-

rect kick. The ball was placed on the spot on the touchline where the ball went out of bounds or behind it.

Ludlow boys’ varsity soccer coach Greg Kolodziey really didn’t mind the elimination of throw-ins.

“We have benefitted over the years from having a player who could throw it far,” Kolodziey said. “You could create more scoring chances on more restarts with the kick-in.”

There were also no head balls allowed.

“I think the rule change that affected the game the most was elimination of head balls. I’ve never seen so many well-executed shoulder balls in my life,” Kolodziey added. “But there were a lot of good scoring chances missed by all the teams due to not being allowed to head the ball.”

Players were not allowed to make intentional physical contact with an opposing player.

“We always stress the importance of not committing reckless and needless fouls,” Kolodziey said. “If the health situation is under control, I do think all the modified rules will be changed back next season.”

Goalkeepers weren’t allowed to kick, punt dropkick, or throw the ball in the air beyond the

midfield line.

If the ball did travel in the air beyond the midfield line without touching a player, the resulting restart was an indirect kick for the opposing team from the spot it crossed midfield. “I strongly disliked the rule where the goalie could not punt, or goal kick the ball over half,” said Ware boys varsity soccer coach Jesse Trzpit. “To me, it didn’t make a lot of sense to begin with, I didn’t see how it benefitted anyone’s safety and it also took a large advantage away from our team. Our starting goalie consistently kicks the ball over half which gives us an opportunity to move the ball up field more so than other ways. Our backup goalie also has the ability to do this.”

All of the high school soccer matches were played in four ten-minute quarters instead of two twenty minutes halves.

A couple of the other rule changes were corner kicks were indirect kicks, no timeouts will be allowed, and there were no rebounds allowed on penalty kicks. Coaches, players and referees wore masks during the game.

Everyone is hoping to have a normal high school soccer season in the fall of 2021.



Girls soccer adjusted to the modified rules of soccer, which included no throw-ins and goalies could not punt over the half line.



Boys soccer had to do without head balls, a big part of the attack game.

Claremont to host Granite Pro Stock Series

WALPOLE, N.H. -- Granite State Pro Stock Series officials announced on Thursday a 15-race schedule for the 2021 race season. The slate will bring drivers to three different New England states -- while visiting eight different tracks in one of the most complete schedules the series has ever offered for teams and fans.

The calendar is headlined by the annual Newport Chevrolet 150 at Claremont Motorsports Park, this time on Saturday, July 31 -- a \$10,000 to win show that is sure to draw the top Super Late Model talent in the region. The series will also make a debut at one of New England’s most historic tracks and return to multiple staple facilities, with a mix of flat and banked tracks planned.

“We’re thrilled with the way our schedule came together for the 2021 season,” Mike Parks, president of the Granite State Pro Stock Series, said. “We always strive to get 14-16 races and we were able to accomplish it again. We think our competitors and fans will enjoy it.”

The season starts with the big debut in Connecticut. Granite State teams will compete at Stafford Motor Speedway for the first time as part of the annual NAPA Spring Sizzler weekend on Saturday, April 24 -- a one-day show. Pro Stocks are no stranger to the Arute-owned facility -- having run as a weekly division for decades -- but now, the touring stars will invade to compete with some of the local talent that are sure to find themselves a ride.

“To say we are thrilled to finally bring the Granite State Pro Stock Series to Stafford would be an understatement,” Parks said. “This will be the icing on the cake to kick-off the Greatest Race in the History of the Spring, the annual NAPA Spring Sizzler. It’s going to be an amazing event for our series and the track both.”

Following Stafford, just one week later, Monadnock Speedway will host their first of two series events on Sunday afternoon, May 2 as part of their sea-

Please see **PRO STOCK**, page 11

Several unknowns for winter season

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – In Western Massachusetts, winter sports are scheduled to begin in early January, but that is pending the creation of a new schedule and the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference forming geographic “bubble” leagues for basketball and hockey, as well as swimming.

In November, the PVIAC agreed to go ahead with winter sports, but made a number of rulings:

- Compete in a bubble that will limit contact with fewer athletes (schools).
- Start date for winter sports January 4, 2021 through February 20, 2021
- The scheduled amount of games will be: Team sports (Basketball, Swimming, Ice Hockey) 10-12 Skiing 5-6 contest
- No independent varsity contests, only those given by schedulers.
- Spectators for Indoor Games TBD.
- Out of season coaching: There will be no out of season coaching during the Winter Sea-

son

- Strongly recommend no captains practices.

With the recent rollout of a vaccine as well as a second one now in the pipeline that could accelerate the vaccination process, it is unclear if decisions made about fans will be revisited at some point.

Another decision that must be made is what schools will be participating in the winter season.

Changes that have already been made for the season include the addition of Southwick to the winter ranks. Southwick’s school committee did not allow the school to participate in the fall season, but has agreed to support the winter season. Southwick has boys and girls basketball as well as ice hockey.

Belchertown, while it will allow swimming and basketball, hockey is not being allowed due to the fact the UMass practice rink, their home ice, is not available. Belchertown’s school committee confirmed other options for Belchertown would be in communities that currently in the red status for being labeled “high-risk” for COVID-19 spread. Belchertown is one of

the towns not allowed to play other schools that have the red designation.

Holyoke High School, which ceased its fall season on Oct. 21, is set to participate in the winter season with basketball and swimming, but can only do so if it gets out of the red by Dec. 24 and remains out of the red until the season starts in January. It is possible the school will start late.

Other changes and decisions are still pending, though many schools have already opted to participate.

Pathfinder will participate in winter sports, but must find another venue due to the fact their gymnasium is currently being used as a cafeteria.

While the PVIAC has not made an official ruling on whether fans will be allowed in arenas, the MIAA’s current guidance is to allow up to 40 percent of a gymnasium’s capacity. However, the number of game participants (players, coaches, officials, etc.) count toward that 40 percent. Some schools, like the fall, could bar fans altogether in an effort to lower the spread while the current surge is still on.

T-Birds announce massive teddy bear donation

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds’ Foundation is pleased to announce a donation of over 1,000 teddy bears and stuffed animals to local charitable partners, the culmination of a successful Drive-Thru Teddy Bear Toss presented by Teddy Bear Pools & Spas, that was held on Saturday, Dec. 12 outside of the MassMutual Center in downtown Springfield.

This morning, the Thunderbirds’ mascot Boomer, along with staff members, made deliveries of hundreds of stuffed animals to Square One, Center for Human Development (CHD), Boys and Girls Club of Springfield, and the Boys & Girls Club, Family Center in Springfield.

“Our holiday celebrations are looking much different this year, but the Springfield Thunderbirds have proven that with a bit of creativity and careful planning, the children in our community can still experience the magic of the season,” says Kristine Allard, Vice President of Development & Communications, Square One. “We are so grateful to Nate Costa and the entire Thunderbirds community for keeping the tradition of the Teddy Bear Toss alive. Our children will be overjoyed!”

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual Teddy Bear Toss event was much different than previous years. Instead of tossing the bears onto the ice after the first T-Birds first goal during a home game in December, fans brought their new teddy bears or stuffed animals down and ‘tossed’ them out of their vehicles as part of the Drive-Thru Teddy Bear Toss at the MassMutual Center on the corner of Main St. and Bruce Landon Way. Boomer, the Nicebox Icebox, and front office staff were present to collect donations and



Submitted photos

Despite the pandemic conditions, the Springfield Thunderbirds still held its annual teddy bear drive.



The Thunderbirds mascot tosses a teddy bear from a donor's car.

kicked off on #GivingTuesday, the annual global movement that encourages people to do good and support nonprofits, encouraging fans that couldn’t physically attend the event to donate to the Thunderbirds’ Foundation and sponsor a bear. Over 250 bears were sponsored by local and national supporters of the Teddy Bear Toss through donations to the Thunderbirds’ Foundation, including a significant number donated by Balise Auto Group.

“We are amazed and grateful at the outpouring of support for the Drive-Thru Teddy Bear Toss” said Thunderbirds President Nathan Costa. “Teddy Bear Toss is a staple event for the Thunderbirds, and our fans came out in full support. We can’t thank our fans, partners, and those that donated to our Foundation enough to be able to bring smiles to children at this time of year.”

The Thunderbirds extend a special thank you to all of their partners that stepped up and were able to make this event a reality, including: Teddy Bear Pools & Spas, Balise Auto Group, Western Mass News, the Springfield Business Improvement District & downtown Visitor’s Center, New Valley Bank & Trust and Dunkin’. The Thunderbirds also would like to thank their teddy bear delivery partner, BMW of West Springfield.

The Thunderbirds Teddy Bear Toss was established in 2016, whereby the Thunderbirds’ first goal in the annual Teddy Bear Toss game results in a celebration of bears being thrown onto the ice. Since starting the tradition four seasons ago, the Thunderbirds have contributed more than 10,000 bears to local Springfield charities.

properly package and sanitize them. Those that couldn’t make it that day also donated at the Thunderbirds office, at Teddy Bear Pools & Spas in Chicopee, the Springfield Visitor Center, or at New Valley Bank’s new headquarters located in Monarch Place in downtown Springfield.

“The T-Birds and their loyal fans have again stepped up to bring holiday joy to children and families receiving services in CHD programs across western Massachusetts,” said Ben Craft, CHD’s Vice President of Community Engagement. “We deeply appreciate the Thunderbirds organization’s partnership and strong commitment to our community, and we can’t wait to get back to the arena to cheer them on when it’s safe to do so.”

The virtual and drive-thru version of the Teddy Bear Toss

Senior photos from fall season wanted

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

The fall season is nearing its end and Turley Publications has been all over the action. But with this unpredictable season there have been temporary or in some cases, permanent stoppages in play, and we still want to help feature your athletes, espe-

cially those who are seniors this year. We continue to ask for help on this season in order to bring the best coverage we can possibly manage and fill our pages with names and color. We know that fans will be limited to the home crowds, but that is where you all come in. If you attended any senior

games and would like to see those photos in our papers, we welcome submitted photos from those events and information about graduating seniors who participated in Fall 1 sports. We also welcome any additional information about other major achievements. Send any and all information and photos for inclusion to sports@turley.com.

Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching “turleysports.” We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and share with your friends

and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections in the coming weeks, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.



PRO STOCK from page 10

son-opening Spring Dash weekend. Post-time for this event is 2 p.m., with the NHSTRA Modifieds, NELCAR Legends and more also on the card. A second stop at “Mad Dog” is slated for Saturday, September 4 as part of Labor Day weekend at the Winchester, New Hampshire, oval. The series heads to Bobby Webber’s Star Speedway for the first of two stops on Saturday night, May 8, before a return to the Star Classic weekend on Friday, September 17 comes in the thick of the championship battle. Last year, Derek Griffith and Joey Pole put together one of the best races in series history as part of the Classic at Star, which has become a staple track for the series. Claremont Motorsports Park hosts their first of three dates

on Memorial Day weekend as a Sunday evening special, May 30. Following the \$10,000 to win Newport Chevrolet 150 in July, an event won by Derek Griffith last year, the champion will be crowned at Claremont for the first time on October 16 as part of the track’s Fall Challenge weekend. Beech Ridge Motor Speedway in Maine will hold two Granite State events for the first time in track history -- with stops set for June 12 and August 14. Last year, the series hosted more than 30 cars as a mix of regulars and track favorites competed for glory in the inaugural stop at Beech Ridge -- a race won by Wyatt Alexander. “We had so much success with our first appearance at Beech Ridge last year, the car count was fantastic and Andy and the staff there welcomed us and our teams

for a great event,” Parks said. “Going there twice should give us much of the same we saw in 2020.” Additional summer events include the annual stop at Riverside Speedway in Groveton, New Hampshire, on June 19 and the Sunday afternoon spectacular at Hudson Speedway on Sunday, July 11. Granite State teams will also stop at Lee USA Speedway twice -- both at some of the track’s most historic race weekends. The first comes on Friday, July 2, celebrating Independence Day -- and the second will be on Sunday, October 3 as part of the season-ending Octoberfest. There is one event that remains outstanding on the series schedule -- dated for Saturday, July 24 -- which is on track to be announced soon. Series officials are working on the final details

surrounding that event and will announce once available. The Granite State Pro Stock Series will have further updates surrounding the 2021 season when available. For more information, visit gspss.net and follow the series on social media.

2021 GRANITE STATE PRO STOCK SERIES SCHEDULE:

April 24 -- Stafford Motor Speedway -- Stafford, Conn. -- 75 laps

May 2 -- Monadnock Speedway -- Winchester, N.H. -- 100 laps

May 8 -- Star Speedway -- Epping, N.H. -- 100 laps

May 30 -- Claremont Speedway -- Claremont, N.H. -- 100 laps

June 12 -- Beech Ridge Motor Speedway -- Scarborough, Maine

-- 150 laps

June 19 -- Riverside Speedway -- Groveton, N.H. -- 150 laps

July 2 -- Lee USA Speedway -- Lee, N.H. -- 100 laps

July 11 -- Hudson International Speedway -- Hudson, N.H. -- 100 laps

July 24 -- TBA

July 31 -- \$10k to Win -- Claremont Motorsports Park -- Claremont, N.H. -- 100 laps

August 14 -- Beech Ridge Motor Speedway -- Scarborough, Maine -- 150 laps

September 4 -- Monadnock Speedway -- Winchester, N.H. -- 100 laps

September 17 -- Star Speedway -- Epping, N.H. -- 100 laps

October 3 -- Lee USA Speedway -- Lee, N.H. -- 100 laps

October 16 -- Claremont Motorsports Park -- Claremont, N.H. -- 100 laps

YEAR IN REVIEW from page 9

over a month, South Hadley opened its trails once more in May.

South Hadley Selectboard member Sarah Etelman said she noticed as the weather improved, more and more of her neighbors were outside.

“People got creative,” she said. “For those of us who used to have gym memberships, we got out and active. Even with ways of saying ‘thank you’ or ‘congratulations,’ everyone did what they could.”

Hundreds, if not thousands, of residents flocked to the trails to enjoy the outdoors and get out of the house. Unfortunately, with added usage, unique problems emerged, and one was identified by Conservation Administrator/Planner Anne Capra during a May 27 interview.

“I have been receiving a lot of complaints about dog activity; dogs are only allowed on a leash,” said Capra. “People are leaving pet waste behind both bagged and un-bagged. Frankly, besides being disgusting, it’s rude.”

June

June was the month during which optimism prevailed, as more operations and businesses reopened to their loyal clientele. Restaurants welcomed customers again, first outdoors on June 8 and then indoors, at a limited capacity, on June 22.

“It feels normal for the first time in months. I think that local businesses must be supported at this point in time, and a lot of these businesses have been closed for quite a while. It’s nice to be able to support local businesses and be out in society again,” said Jennifer Mallo, a patron at Johnny’s Bar and Grille in the Village Commons on June 10.

As residents ventured back into the world, they were greeted by a host of new, unfamiliar protocols. Masks were required indoors at all locations, menus at restaurants were printed on paper and disposed of after one use and basketball courts reopened and then closed again.

Businesses were expected to abide religiously by each new guideline. When it came to enforcement, Sullivan explained that teamwork was key.

“We’d rather encourage than enforce,” said Sullivan. “We certainly don’t want to come down hard with people. We know it’s a trying time. We want to work with people and keep them safe. If they make an innocent or common mistake, we want to work with them and not penalize them. Every business in town is valuable to us so we want to make sure that they’re going in a positive direction as well.”

Granby High School held its graduation outside in the parking lot of the school, inviting families to attend in their vehicles and listen to the ceremony via radio.

July

Granby held its Annual Town Meeting outside under a tent at Granby Jr./Sr. High School.

The 82-minute affair was largely uneventful with the exception of an interesting conversation regarding a lawnmower.

Article 13 called for the town to allot \$115,000 towards the purchase of an air

conditioned mower for the Public Buildings Department. The Finance Committee recommended that the item be postponed indefinitely. The vast majority of those in attendance were in favor of purchasing the new mower.

Following the local election in Granby, Emre Evren was unanimously approved as the chair of the school committee, a position previously held by Michael Simpson.

Effective June 30, Granby Superintendent Sheryl Stanton left her position to become the superintendent of Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School District in Buckland.

In her resignation letter, Stanton said Hepworth, retiring pupil services director, postponed her retirement to serve as interim superintendent.

All motorized vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles and dirt bikes, are prohibited on conservation areas owned by the town of South Hadley, according to a press release from the Planning and Conservation Department.

Illegal use of ATVs and motorized dirt bikes at the town-owned Bynan Conservation Area and the Bachelor Brook-Stoney Brook Conservation Area have been observed in recent weeks.

The town received multiple complaints about damage to trails on the property as well as adjacent private property by ATVs and dirt bikes.

August

While graduation for the class of 2020 was not what high school seniors anticipated it would be, there were moments of familiarity in the drive-up graduation on Aug. 7.

Students were able to walk across the stage, receive their diplomas, take photos with their families and give speeches.

Each the students’ speeches were filmed by South Hadley Community Television, which will have a video of each graduate crossing the stage as well.

Throughout the day on Friday, students and their families parked in the high school lot in 10-minute intervals. They also received a professional portrait taken by a photographer hired by the schools and a goodie bag from the South Hadley Drug and Alcohol Prevention Coalition.

An active group of South Hadley High School students recently organized an Aug. 1 vigil that honored those who have lost their lives to police brutality or suffered from inequalities last week in the school’s parking lot.

The initiative served as the debut project for the recently established student group, the South Hadley Student Union. A score of residents joined the students in the high school parking lot, lighting candles and taking a knee to memorialize all who have succumbed to racial injustices.

The student-led protest sought to educate residents on various issues that exist in South Hadley. Nic Long and her fellow student union members aim to address “homophobia and any inequity problems that arise in our community.”

A historic moment in Granby was also commemorated virtually.

On the 75th anniversary of the Victory



Archive photos

Many voters opted to vote early in the general election in Granby, with 2,800 early and absentee votes received.

over Japan aka Victory in the Pacific on Saturday, Aug. 15, there was a small ceremony in Granby.

“The world woke to a new peace after it was announced Japan had withdrawn and thus ending World War II,” wrote piper Todd Carpenter. “Bagpipers around the world were asked to pipe one tune at sunrise. The tune’s name was ‘When the Battle’s O’er.’”

There was a local connection as well – a plane crash which killed seven people.

At the location is of the first Bomber Crash in the town of Granby, which occurred on Sept. 17, 1944, Carpenter played the song.

Carpenter played “When the Battle’s O’er” at the site of the first bomber crash in Granby in 1944.

September

In today’s world, there’s no such thing as being too young to inspire those around you. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 10-year-old South Hadley resident Aaliyah Hall has done just that and more.

Over the past six months, Hall has followed her heart and imagination by launching “Dreamland with Aaliyah,” a nightly interactive program on Facebook Live. Hall has connected with thousands of readers across the world, simultaneously raising \$10,000 for multiple nonprofit organizations and causes.

Two local representatives of the youth-led service group, Project 351, partook in the initiative on Sept. 11, expressing gratitude for emergency personnel on the 19th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

“We made little care packages for all the police and first responders in South Hadley and Granby,” said Granby Junior/Senior High School student Ariana Klekotka, a Project 351 alumnus and peer leader.

Klekotka collaborated with Jenna Bobrowski, South Hadley’s current Project 351 ambassador. Together, Klekotka and Bobrowski distributed thank you packages to employees at the South Hadley Police Department, South Hadley Fire Districts 1 and 2, the Granby Police Dept. and Granby Fire Dept.

After a career in municipal government that has spanned decades, South Hadley Town Administrator Mike Sullivan is eyeing retirement. Sullivan has served the town in his position since 2013, and expects to retire on June 30, 2021 when his contract runs its course.

“Whoever comes to South Hadley, I can guarantee you’ll enjoy it. Anyone would be lucky to hold this position,” said Sullivan. “It’s a great community and a great town to work in, and I’m sure they’re going to find a quality person.”

October

A new student resource officer has been chosen to patrol the halls of South Hadley High School. Following the retirement of SRO Steve Fleming and the promotion of former SRO Doug Percy to sergeant., Officer Josh Helems was recently assigned to the position.

Helems made a formal introduction during the Oct. 5 virtual meeting of the School Committee.



Eric Segundo, VFW MA Past State Commander, presents World War II veteran Phil Girard with a Certificate of Honor.

After three years of arduous preparation, the South Hadley Dog Park opened to the public on Oct. 8. The 1.8-acre facility offers separate play areas for both small and large dogs to exercise and recreate.

“It is fabulous. It’s beyond fabulous. The park is beautiful. It’s just wonderful for dogs and their human owners,” said Brenda Mathieu, president of the Friends of the South Hadley Dog Park, a nonprofit organization that is seeking donations for the upkeep and maintenance of the park.

Located along Mulligan Drive close to Ledges Golf Club, the spacious park opened with little fanfare, an action taken to prevent a large gathering.

Granby selectboard hired Robert Czerwinski as an interim fire chief.

The selectboard discussed finding an interim fire chief following the termination of Granby Fire Chief John Mitchell Jr. on July 23. During executive sessions, the board discussed Mitchell’s employment with the town and determined in a July 22 executive session to terminate him, effective the next day.

November

President-elect Joe Biden led heavily in South Hadley, accumulating 6,587 votes, which amounted to 65.79% of the total count. At that point, President Donald Trump had received 3,223 votes, 32.19% of all votes.

Notably, a total of 10,091 voters cast their vote in the election on Tuesday, an 82.5% turnout, 25.94% of voters cast their ballots in person on Tuesday.

Voters in Granby certainly showed up to voice their opinion with a total of 82% turnout in the national election with 3,945 of 4,855 voters who cast their ballot.

In 2016, 1,447 voters voted early, 31% of Granby’s registered voters, according to the 2016 Annual town report.

A single neutral arbitrator has found that the town of Granby did not have just cause to suspend Fire Chief John Mitchell for 30 days in May.

Granby was ordered to immediately

Please see **YEAR IN REVIEW**, page 15



Alongside her daughter Emily, Mary Bagley identifies her street name and the entrance to the high school assigned to her precinct on Election Day.

If you're grieving, here are tips for navigating the holidays

By Liane Smola

For those of us who have lost someone it is hard to imagine how we will get through the upcoming holiday season. You may even wish you could skip the holidays all together, somehow put yourself on a fast track through them so you could eliminate the pain and heartache of not having your loved one partake in your family traditions.

Sadly, I cannot sugar coat it. The holidays without your loved one can be very difficult. You wouldn't be experiencing these feelings of grief had you not loved. As I always say, be easy on yourself through these times. I am hopeful you find some of the content included helpful as you navigate through the holiday season.

Take care and be well, friends.

The holidays can be a stressful time for all of us even if we are not experiencing grief. We put a great deal of pressure on ourselves to decorate our homes, purchase the most perfect gifts, deliver the most delectable meals while managing the shuffle from home to home visiting friends and family. The pressure and stress for those who are not grieving is at an all-time high. Some studies show as high as 88% of people reporting feeling very high to extremely high stress levels. Now, can you imagine going into the holiday season with the feelings of grief layered on top of the stress we put on ourselves through these times anyways? If you are grieving this holiday season you may be feeling:

- Sad
- Fatigued
- Lonely/Empty Inside
- Helpless
- Confused
- Angry
- Not able to task
- Overwhelmed

You must remember, you are not alone. Lean on those around you, your family, your friends. If you do not have a traditional support system, there are resources available to you. Outreach to a counselor, a grief coach, a support group. There are amazing community support groups available who can guide you through the challenging feelings you are experiencing. At GuidanceByLi we are also here to provide you a safe space to share your feelings and navigate



Courtesy photo

Liane Smola says the holidays can be stressful for everyone, but particularly for those who are grieving. She provides thoughts and tips for navigating what can be a difficult period.

through these difficult days.

I would like to share some tips that may help in dealing with the approaching season. Each tip may not be a "one-fits-all" solution.

Depending on where you are in your grief or whom you are grieving for you may find that there are specific tips that resonate for you. Throughout my coaching I always remind my clients that each and every person grieves differently. There are no two situations exactly the same. Therefore, why would we think that every tip or tool offered would work for every person grieving? In my journey of giving and sharing, it is important to me to share things that have worked for myself, others, or items I may come across through research or learning. There are a host of resources out there available to you at the click of a button. I remember when the internet was not an option. Going to the library and reading

was the only way to truly access the information that you can now get at your fingertips in seconds. Take advantage of the resources available to you. I will continue to do my best to share tools and tips that I have come across in my own experience and in my studies.

I am hopeful that you are able to find something that resonates with you that you may be able to implement or find helpful as you navigate the days ahead:

It is OK to say no to invitations. If you are not feeling up for the occasion you can simply set a boundary for yourself and kindly say no. This year may make that response even easier due to COVID social distancing concerns. Or limit the number of commitments you make all together.

If you are up to attending a holiday get together, participate as little or as much as desired. Don't put so much pressure on yourself to "show-up" the way

you have always done in the past. As I always say, be easy on yourself. Remember...this is your journey, so you do not have to partake in activities that cause you stress or anxiety.

Decide what traditions you would like to keep.

Decide what traditions you would like to change ~ If you have always held holiday dinner maybe this year you turn it into holiday brunch. Or celebrate on the Eve as opposed the actual day the holiday falls.

Put out a memory jar or a memory stocking. Each family member can write down memories of your lost loved one and then you can choose a time to share them with one another.

Create a memory table with a picture of your lost loved one, maybe light a candle.

Say yes to help! If family and friends are offering to help, please take them up on their offers. Allow them to make a meal or shop for you. Online shopping can also reduce the stress brought on by the hustle and the bustle of in store shopping.

Setup a scrapbook making table and ask relatives and friends to make copies of their favorite pictures of your lost loved one. Together you can create a beautiful scrapbook in their memory

Make an ornament

Play their favorite music or make their favorite appetizer or meal

Remember...crying is OK – and, you don't have to hide it. You are crying because you miss your loved one. Do not allow others who feel you should be "stronger" get in the way. You are allowed to carry your feelings, express them, and let them out as needed

Donate to a local charity or donate your time to a local soup kitchen. Believe it or not, helping others can shift the deep sadness you are suffering off your plate and you may find gratitude in assisting others in need.

Be mindful of having too many alcoholic drinks or over-eating. Both may help mask your pain in the moment but can make you feel really crummy the following day.

Shake things up a bit all together and do something out of the ordinary. Go sky diving, hike a mountain or if you are not a risk taker... go to spa and pamper yourself with relaxation.

Make a list of three things you currently feel grateful for. Three things that make your

heart happy and smile. Carry your list with you throughout your day. When you are having a particularly difficult moment, take your list out and remind yourself of the goodness you jotted down.

Love and cherish your family and friends that are still physically here sharing this holiday season with you. Lean on them. Ask them for support. Give them a hug.

The Benefits of Hugs

More often than not I think we take for granted the benefits we receive by just giving or receiving a simple hug. When we engage in a hug a hormone called oxytocin is released into our body. Oxytocin is also known as the "trust hormone" and has proven beneficial physiological effects on your cardiovascular and emotional happiness. Studies show we can receive the following benefits from a hug a day:

- Reduced Blood Pressure
- Reduced Stress & Anxiety
- Improve Immunity
- Improve Memory

Why not try it out today? It may be just what you need this holiday season.

I hope you have found value in our first ever written newsletter. As you move through this holiday season, remember to be easy on yourself. If your loved one could send you a message or sit down next to you, I am almost certain they would want to tell you to celebrate the way you always have. They would not want you to miss the joy you once experienced during the holidays because they are no longer physically here to celebrate with you. You are blessed with the gift of their memory. Make yourself a list of the top five most memorable holiday moments you shared with your lost loved one and as you jot down each event, think of how that memory made you feel when you were experiencing it. Picture the laughter, the embrace, the smells of delicious food. Hold onto the goodness of all the times you had the opportunity to laugh together, to hold onto one another, to celebrate one another. If you close your eyes, it's almost like you can bring yourself there.

Sending you peace and love this holiday season ~Li

Liane Smola runs GuidanceByLi in Wilbraham

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